

CONCEPT OF AGNIMANDYA & ROLE OF AMA IN VANDHYATVA

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ABSTRACT

In the Present era, human beings become very irregular in their lifestyle. A sedentary lifestyle and improper over-eating habits lead to *Vikriti* of *Agni*. Due to the *Vikriti* of *Agni*, the food consumed needs to be adequately digested. The proper state of *Agni* keeps the body healthy. The concept of *Agni* governs the digestion and metabolism of food. *Agni* is responsible for the appropriate growth and development of the human body. Ayurveda describes 13 types of *Agni*. *Agni* specifically performs various enzymatic activities of the body, such as *Deepan*, *Pachan*, and *Bhedan*. If a person's *Agni* is normal or *Prakrit*, then that person will be healthy and long-lived. *Bal*, *Swasthya*, *Pran*, and *Aayu* of the body depend on *Agni*. When *Agni* is *Dushti* occurs, *Samyak Pachan* of *Ahara* gets disturbed, leading to indigested food (*Ama* formation). This *Ama* adheres to cell walls and obstructs the body's channels (*Srotas*) because of its sticky nature (*Bahu pichhila guna*). Multiple diseases are thereby brought on. *Ama*'s effects also weaken the body's resistance and strength. According to Ayurveda, *Mandagni* or the Activity of *Agni* is the root cause of all diseases. So, to prevent and treat diseases, it is necessary to maintain the normal functioning of *Agni*.

Keywords: Agni, Ama, Agnidushti

INTRODUCTION

The term *Agnimandya* comes from the combination of the words *Agni* (Fire or Digestive fluids) and *Manda* (Low). Hence, *Agnimandya* refers to the state in which the power of *Jatharagni* (digestive fluids) is reduced, leading to improper digestion of food. According to Ayurveda, *Agnimandya* is the primary cause of all metabolic diseases, starting with Indigestion (*Ajeerna*). In present times, due to abnormal eating habits and mental stress of humans, many diseases arise by distorting *Agni* present in the body like *Agnimandya*, *Ajeerna*, etc. According to Ayurveda, there are 13 types of *Agni* present in the body, out of which 1 is *Jatharagni*, 5 are *Bhutagni* and 7 are *Dhatwagni*. Specifically, women had a somewhat higher prevalence of FGIDs (32.5%) than did men (30.9%). Among the several FGID categories, functional dyspepsia and constipation had the highest prevalence rates, at 10.7% (220/2057) and 9.3% (191/2057), respectively. 6.8% (140/2057), 2.2% (47/2057), 2.2% (46/2057), 1.5% (30/2057), 1.5% (32/2057), and 0.98% (20/2057) were the prevalence rates of the other FGIDs, in that order. Among these were fecal incontinence, functional heartburn, belching problems, functional diarrhea, and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

Agni - A thorough analysis is necessary to evaluate the scientific validity of many of the Ayurvedic concepts. The concept of *Agni* is one such aspect, the study of which is done here. The importance of *Agni* in the animal body is highlighted. It is said that all internal ailments stem from the vitiation of this *Agni*. The other factors that are responsible for maintaining health, producing diseases, and causing degeneration circle around this. *Nyaya-Vaishesika* states that *Agni* can be categorized into three groups:

Bhauma or the Physical fire.

- i. *Divya* or the celestial fire like the lightning, sun rays, moon, and the stars.
- ii. *Audarya*, or abdominal fire, is responsible for digestion and metabolism.
- iii. *Akaraj* which is present in metals such as gold and silver.

Aside from its role in digestion, *Agni* also produces strength, which is divided into two halves –

- Strength to withstand illness and deterioration in the human body

- Strength to engage in physical activity.

The metabolism of tissue generates heat and energy, which is the direct result of *bala*, or strength.

The Pitta idea in this system reflects *Agni* in Ayurveda. The root "*Tapa*" is where the word "*Pitta*" originates. This term has three interpretations: *Tapa aishwarye*, *Tapa daahe*, and *Tapa santaape*.

- *Tapa santape* refers to the generation of heat.
- *Tapa daahe* relates to the act of burning the nutrition consumed.
- *Tapa aishwarye* refers to the factor that is responsible for helping one achieve the benefits.

The medical term for an abnormality in food digestion or poor digestion is called dyspepsia or indigestion. Several digestive problems, including upset stomach and gas (belching or flatulence), are called "indigestion". According to Ayurvedic medicine, eating without moderation and not following dietary regulations can lead to indigestion or *Ajeerna*. This makes pre-existing conditions worse and raises the possibility of food poisoning. Prevalence rate of Dyspepsia worldwide is 20-30%, and in India it is 30-49%.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES –

- To study the concept of *Agni* and *Ama* according to Ayurveda.
- To understand the importance of *Agni* in treating *Vyadhi* concerning current research work.
- To study the role of *Ama* in different *Vyadhis*.

MATERIAL AND METHODS -

A review of Ayurvedic writings served as the foundation for this article. There is a collection of materials on *Agni*, *Agnimandya*, and other pertinent subjects. The primary Ayurvedic texts utilised in this research are *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Sushrut Samhita*, *Madhav nidana*, and *Charak Samhita*, together with any relevant commentary on these works. To learn about recent studies on the pertinent subjects, we have consulted various websites and scholarly magazines.

Role of Agni in Ayurveda -

The central concept of Ayurveda is *Agni* or digestive fire. It controls all metabolic functions, such as diges-

tion, excretion, and absorption. To put it simply, *Agni* is the energy that converts food into waste and fuel. Its equilibrium is essential to our lives and provides the basis for good health. In Ayurveda, the anatomy, physiology, pathology, and diagnosis of the human body are explained by the principles of *Triguna* (*Sattva-Raja-Tama*), *Tanmatra*, *Panchamahabhoota*, *Tridosha* (*Vata-Pitta-Kapha*), and *Agni*. According to Ayurveda, *Agni* is a physical fire, and a liquid state called "*Pitta*." According to *Acharya Charaka*, *Agni* and *Pitta* are inseparably interconnected in metabolic processes, and *Agni* cannot exist independently of *Pitta*. Food ingestion and metabolism involve the interaction of multiple *Agnis*, including *Dhatvagni*, *Jatharagni*, and *Bhutagni*. *Jatharagni* initiates the process of food digestion and encourages *Bhutagnis*, who disintegrates food into its parts. *Dhatvagni* uses the circulation in the *Srotas* to help her break down these digested nutrients so that the body's tissues can be powered. *Jatharagni* must function adequately to preserve health and prevent sickness. When *Jatharagni* is balanced, it supports immunity (*ojas*), strength, longevity, complexion, and other vital body processes. Imbalances in the *Jatharagni* can bring on many diseases and health issues. Ultimately, Ayurveda emphasises how *Agni's* condition affects the body's ability to remain healthy and how illness arises. In human bodies, *Agni* has various functions. *Agni* is responsible for breaking down food into tiny particles during digestion to facilitate the easy absorption and assimilation of nutrients.

Metabolism: It controls the metabolic reactions that turn food into tissues and energy.

Detoxification: *Agni* assists the body in eliminating harmful substances known as *Ama*. As such, it is an essential element of interior harmony and purity.

Encourage mental stability: *Agni's* role is to support mental qualities like comprehension, concentration, and clarity. *Agni* is, therefore, in charge of having a clear and focused mentality.

Immunity: Strong and balanced *Agni* is vital for the functioning of the immune system by producing healthy tissue and immune cells.

TYPES OF AGNI:

There are 13 types of *Agni* mentioned in *Samhita* and it is divided into three main categories:

1. *Jathragni*
2. *Bhutagni*
3. *Dhatavagni*

Apart from these types of *Agni*, there are mainly four major types of *Agni* mentioned

1. *Samagni*
2. *Vishamagni*
3. *Tikshagni*
4. *Mandagni*

Effect of *Vishamagni* (Irregular *Agni*) and *Tikshanagni* (Excessive *Agni*)

विषमो धातुवैषम्यं करोति विषमं पचन्।

तीक्ष्णो मन्देन्धनो धातून् विशेषयति पावकः॥५०॥

The *Vishamagni* causes improper digestion, which causes the *Dhatu*s to form unevenly. The *Tikshagni* (Excessive *Agni*), with a small amount of food, digests the complete food and starts digesting The *Dhatu*.

Samagni

युक्तं भुक्तवतो युक्तो धातुसाम्यं समं पचन्। *Agni* is *Sama*, or in a balanced state, when the right diet plan (described in [*Cha.Sa.Sutra Sthana* 5] and [*Cha.Sa.Vimana Sthana* 1/21]) is also followed. This results in appropriate food digestion, which supports preserving the *dhatu's* proper balance.

Mandagni

दुर्बलो विदहत्यन्नं तद्यात्यूर्ध्वमधोऽपि वा॥५१॥ *Durbala* (weak) *Agni* brings about partial digestion of food. These partially digested bio substances then enter circulation, which may move either upward or downward. *Acharya Charak* said, "Agni is the only factor whose presence is survival and absence is death." *Grahani* (the organ representing duodenum and small intestine) is the site of *Agni* (digestive enzyme). *Agni* lives dependent on their walls. *Grahan* means "to wear". *Grahani*, situated in the upper part of *Nabhi*, holds the food, digests the undigested food, and moves the digested food forward through its lateral walls. When *Jatharagni* becomes weak, *Grahani* also becomes contaminated, and then *Pakwa-apakwa*

anna starts coming out from the *Guda marga*. The state of *Agni* is totally under the control of *Tridosha*, which depends upon food intake. E.g., If *Agneyamsha* does not much exist in food, the state of *Agni* results in a *Manda* state. Where the predominance of *kapha Lakshana*. *Prana Vayu*, *Samana Vayu*, and *Apana Vayu* have played pivotal roles in regulating the gastrointestinal tract, more so *Samana Vayu* about *Jatharagni*. *Samana Vayu* is present near *Agni*, and it moves throughout the *koshtha*. In addition, it is stated that it enables the reception, digestion, and consumption of food. Thus, the entire digestive, absorption, and metabolic process regulated by *Tridosha*, in general, specifically *Samana Vayu*, has a predominant role in regulating *Jatharagni* and its moieties. Hence, *Samana Vayu* became the key factor in the formation of *Ama*.

Causes of Vitiating of Agni -

Vitiating of *Agni* can be caused by overeating, overindulging in food even when it causes indigestion, overeating, irregular eating habits, eating unwholesome food, indulging in food that is difficult to digest or has too much nutritional value, eating food that is dry or emaciating, contaminated food, perversion of procedures like *vamana*, *virechana*, and *sneha*, emaciation of body due to disease, sudden migration to an inappropriate place and time, and suppression of natural urges. Therefore, even light food cannot be digested by vitiating *Agni*.

This vitiating digestive agent first generates an intermediate material known as *Ama*, which ferments to sour (*Shukta*) and then transforms into a Poisonous Substance (*Amavisha*).

Signs and Symptoms of Agnidushti (Indigestion)

This poisonous substance (*Amavisha*) manifests clinical features like flatulence, uncomfortable physical and mental miseries, headache, altered consciousness, giddiness, stiffness of the back and lumbar region, yawning, body ache, Obstruction of Urine and faeces malaise, morbid thirst, fever, vomiting, tenesmus, anorexia, and indigestion.

Ama (Undigested food) –

The word *Ama* is used in everyday language to describe the unripened fruit, i.e., before its usual season of ripening. *Ama* word has meanings of “*Isatpakwa*”,

Asiddha, *Apakwam*, *Vyastatam*, etc. In the Ayurveda text, *Vagbhata* states that “The first *dhatu*, i.e. the *rasa* of chyle (not *rasa dhatu*), which is not formed properly due to hypo functioning of *Ushma* (*Agni*), being retained in *Amashaya* and undergoing fermentation or putrefaction (*Dushti*)”. It is this state of *rasa* known as *Ama*.

Definitions – *Charak* says, “the undigested food which resulted due to various causes of *Mandagni* attain *suktwa* (fermentation) leading to a set of toxic states called as *Amavisha*”.

Sushrut further adds ‘*vranapakabhava*’, i.e., “*Vrana* until it gets *paripakwa* state is called an *Ama* condition temporarily.”

In *Shabda kalpa drumam*, one more is added, stating that “*Ama* is the factor in causation of *Shatprakara Ajirna*.

Sharangdhar says, “The *Samyak pakwa ahara rasa* is called as “*Rasa*” and the *apakwa ahara rasa* as “*Ama*”.

After going through all the definitions, three keywords, ‘*Ama*’, ‘*Amadosha*’, and ‘*Amavisha*’ 3 convey the same meaning. These words were coined for different states of *apakwa dravyas*.

Amotpatti – Let us discuss the role of specific obscure causes in the production of *Ama*.

Primary causes – Primary causes are those that have a direct influence on *Agni* leading to *Mandagni*, which is there by *Amotpatti*.

Direct causes

- Dietic incompatibilities – *Ansana*, *Atibhojan*, *Abhojan*, *Viruddha ahara*, *Atyambu swan*
- Adverse effects of *Shodhana* therapy – *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Vasti*, including *Sneha Sweda*.
- *Vega sandharana*
- Unhygienic conditions and not following *Ahara vidhi visheshayatan*
- *Manasika vikara* –

Indirect causes

- ✓ Any disorders leading to *Agnimandya*
- ✓ Any disorders leading to emaciation
- ✓ All *kaphaj vikaras*



Mental tension, stress, strain, and emotional instabilities like fear, anger, greed, anxiety, depression, etc., have a tremendous somatic impact on bringing down the digestive power.

The sympathetic nervous system and adrenaline have an inhibiting effect on gastric secretions, leading to the *mandagni* condition.

Secondary causes—Secondary causes trigger the *doshas* first, thereby affecting the *agni*, leading to *mandagni*, or *Amotpatti*.

All *Kaphaj* and *Pittaj vikaras* are *Ama* in nature, further aggravating the *Amotpatti* by affecting *Agni*. Without *mandagni*, no *ama* production results; thus, *mandagni* is an intermediate and premier factor in the production of *Ama*.

Some of the disorders which in turn cause *mandagni* there by *Ama* –

- *Grahani*
- *Ajeerna*
- *Jwara*
- *Rajayakshma*
- *Gulma*
- *Shotha*
- *Amavata*
- *Atisara*
- *Pravahika*
- *Arsha*
- *Udar roga*

Role of Ama in Vandhyatva (Infertility) –

Introduction – According to *Shabda Kalpa Drum*, A woman who has any form of obstacle in the regular process of conception is referred to as a *Vandhya*,

A condition where a couple experiences difficulties conceiving or becoming pregnant after one year of regular sexual activity without the use of birth control. A problem with either the man or the woman, or both, can be the root of infertility.

Ritu, *Kshetra*, *Ambu*, and *Beeja* have all been identified as contributing factors in conception. *Ritu* is a *Kapha* phase that follows the proliferative period in

the uterus during ovulation. A healthy female vaginal tract, or *kshetra*, will make it easier for sperm to enter the body. *Ambu* contains hormones and nutrients—disorders of the sperm and egg. Illness in *Ritukala*, A time of *kapha-pitta* preponderance, is known as *ritual*. Fertility may be abnormal if it is influenced by *vata* or *pitta*. *Kshetra* (the female vaginal tract) disorders of Fallopian tube obstruction and vaginal, cervical, or uterine pathologies that are hostile to spermatozoa are known as *Margavarodha* and *Vyapannayoni*, respectively. *Ambu* (nutritional fluids) disorders, dietary deficiency, amniotic fluid issues, or *Garbhasravi* ailments. In *Bija*, Subfertility can be brought on by *Artavadosha* or *sukradoshas*. It occurs due to an unbalanced lifestyle, inadequate digestion, or toxins in the body that disrupt the reproductive system. Ayurvedic infertility therapy improves health by supporting the body's balance. It focuses on how improving infertility treatment can improve an individual's overall health and quality of life. A recent WHO research states that infertility affects a significant portion of the population at some point in their lives. One in six adults globally, or 17.5% of the population, suffer from infertility, indicating the critical need to expand access to high-quality, affordable reproductive care for those who require it. The latest findings indicate that there is little regional difference in the prevalence of infertility. The figures show that this is an enormous worldwide health concern for high-, middle-, and low-income nations. In high-income nations, the lifetime prevalence was 17.8%, while in low- and middle-income nations, it was 16.5%.

Female causative factors -

The important causative factors of female infertility can be classified as follows:

1. **Indirect or non-specific factors** – These include *mithya ahara-vihara*, which are causative factors for *Vatadidosha prakopa* and *Amotpatti*.
2. **Direct or specific factors** – These include primary and secondary factors.

Primary factors – These factors are causes of defects in *Ritu*, *Kshetra*, *Ambu*, and *Beeja*.

- a) Defects in *Ritukala* – eg. *Nashtartava*
- b) Defects in *Kshetra* – Diseases of the reproductive organ that can be classified as
 - Functional diseases – eg. *Pradushta artava*, *Shweta pradara* etc.
 - Organic diseases – eg. *Karnini*, *Mahayoni*, *Udavarta*, *Yonikanda*, *Yoniarsha*, *Garbhashaya arbuda*, etc.
 - Congenital abnormalities – eg. *Antarmukhi*, *Suchimukhi*, *Sandiyoni*, etc.

c) Defects in *ambu* – Improper formation of endometrial bed because of the defect in nourishment from *rasadhatu*.

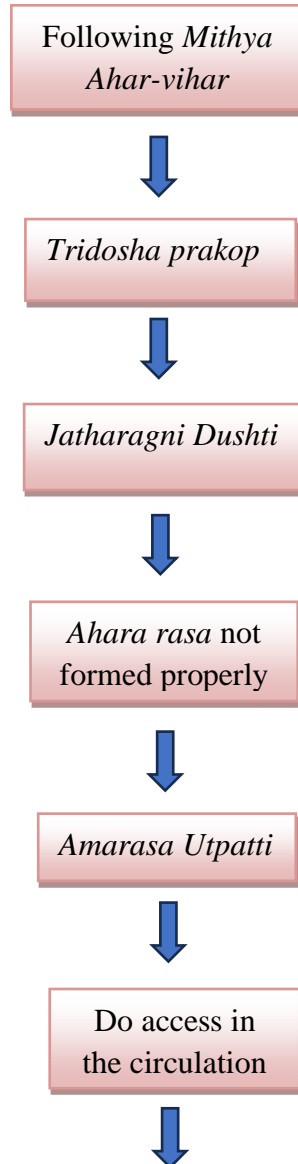
d) Defects in *Beeja* – 1. Abnormal formation of *Stree beeja* (Ovum)

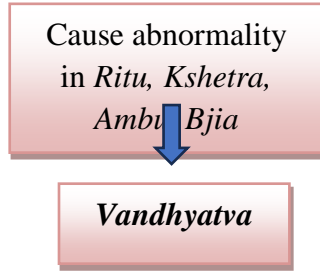
2. Abnormal formation of *Shukra beeja* (Sperm)

Secondary factors – Factors that are responsible for causing abnormality in *Ritu*, *Kshetra*, *Ambu*, & *Beeja*. Eg. *Madhumeha*, *Manasika roga*, Thyroid abnormalities, etc.

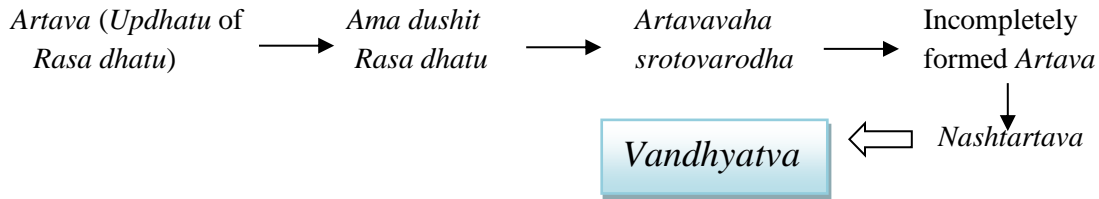
Role of Ama in Samprapti of Vandhyatva –

Ritu, *Kshetra*, *Ambu* & *beej* are the chief factors responsible for conception.



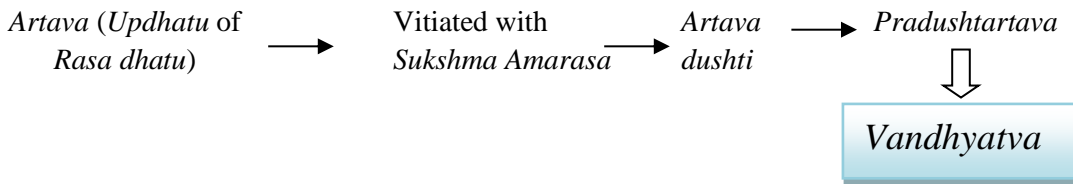


1. Samprapti of abnormality in Ritukala –

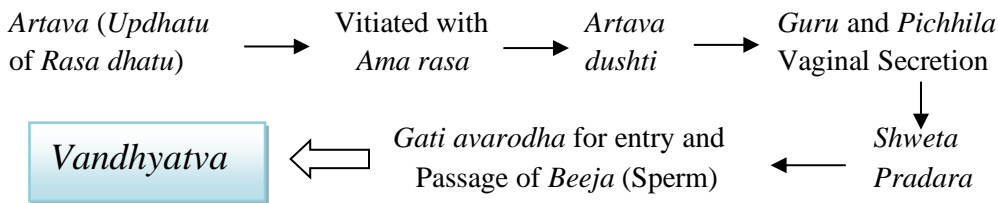


2. Samprapti of abnormality in Kshetra – Healthy Reproductive organs are responsible for conception, which are maintained functionally and structurally by proper nourishment from Rasadhātu. When Rasa dhātu is viti-ated with ama it causes functional and structural abnormalities of Kshetra.

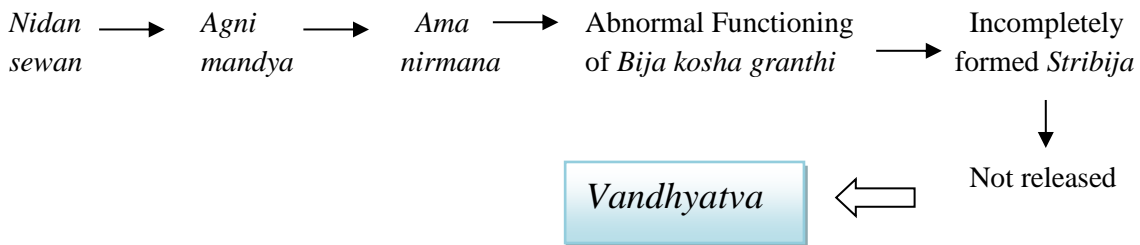
a) Pradushta artava (Menstrual abnormalities): -



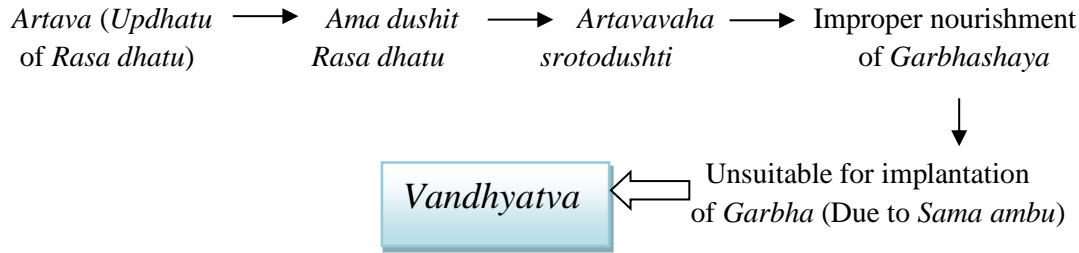
b) Shweta pradara (Pelvic inflammatory disease): -



c) Beejkosha granthi Shopha (PCOD): -

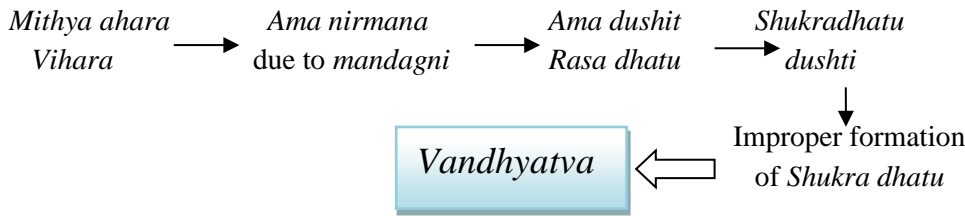


3. Samprapti of abnormality in Ambu –

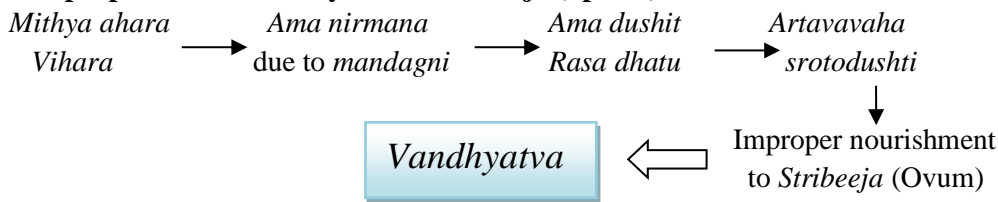


4. Samprapti of abnormalities in Beeja – Shuddha shukra and Shuddha artava are responsible for Garbha formation.

a) Samprapti of Abnormality in Shonit beeja (Ovum): -



b) Samprapti of Abnormality in Shukra beeja (Sperm): -



Chikitsa of Agni and Ama –

Nidana parivarjana i.e. Lifestyle modification is the most important and first line of treatment for diseases. *Agni dushti* and *Ama* formation is a very important treatment protocol because it is mainly caused by *Vikriti* in *Nidana (Hetu)*, *Dosha*, *Agni*, and *Srotas*. *Acharya Charak* says that “No drug should be administered in Acute *Ama* condition” because of *Mandagni* i.e. insufficiency of *Agni* even to digest and assimilate the drug. *Acharya Vagbhatta* classified *Ama dosha* into 3 varieties – *Langhana*, *Langhana-pachana*, and *Doshavasechana* in mild, moderate, and severe conditions according to its severity. Sometimes it becomes difficult when *dosha* & *Ama guna* are at different poles. eg. When *Ama* and *Vata* are together involved, both have opposite lines of treatment, in this condition

treatment becomes difficult because of *Viruddha-upkramatvat*. In such conditions firstly *Pachana Dravya* should be given and wait up to *Ama vilayana* and then go for *Dosha nirharana (Shodhan karma)*.

According to *Sthana Samsraya*, the principle of treatment varies.

Sthoola Amarasa chikitsa- *Sthoola amarasa* condition when *ama* is in *koshtha*, it can be eliminated conveniently either by *Urdhwa* or by *Adho marga* according to the principle of ‘*Asanna margin nirharet*’.

eg. If it is in abundance at *Amashaya*, it naturally causes *Utklesh/chhardi*, or if it is in abundance at *Adho amashaya*, it causes *Atisara*. Hence in such conditions the natural process of elimination by *Shodhan karma* through the nearest *marga* should be done.

Sukshma Amarasa chikitsa –

If *Ama* gets absorbed into the circulation, it is called *Amarasa*, which spreads all over the body and tissue. In such a condition, it will not come under the purview of *Shodhana karma* alone. *Karma* such as *Swedan*, *Langhana*, *Deepan*, and *Pachan* proceeded according to the involvement of *dosha* and *dhatu*. In acute conditions, the *ama* through circulation reaches every cell and tissue and next, it settles at any *Srotovaigunya dhatu*. Hence the treatment varies according to the site of pathogenicity and involvement of *dosha*.

If the *ama* is uniformly spread in all the tissues of the body *Swedan*, *Langhan*, *Pachan*, and *Deepan karma* are useful, whereas *Shodhan karma* is contraindicated.

DISCUSSION

According to the fundamental principles of Ayurveda *Agni* has an important role in the physiological functioning of the body. In Ayurveda, *Agni* is considered to be the root of life. The root cause of *Ayu*, *Bala*, *Varna*, *Swasthya*, *Utsaah*, *Sharir samwardhan*, *Prabha*, *Oj*, *Dehagni*, and *Prana* is the proper functioning of *Jatharagni*. *Jatharagni* is the most important *Agni* among all. The specific type of *Jatharagni* is of 4 types – *Samagni*, *Vishamagni*, *Tikshagni*, and *Mandagni*. In *Mandagni*, *Agni* gets decreased as a result of its digestion of food becoming affected which is known as *Ama*. Nowadays due to a sedentary lifestyle, overeating and mental stress, *Ama* formation occurs. In the initial stage, it is easy to remove *Ama* from the digestive tract, but it becomes much more difficult to do so once it spreads into deeper tissue. When *ama* builds up within the body, it eventually clogs the channels (*Srotamsi*) and interferes with tissue nourishment. *Ama* is not only harmful but also interferes with the cellular level and affects physiological function. *Ama* binds and clogs individual cell membranes when it enters deeper tissue preventing cellular communication and reducing immunological response. This ultimately results in cellular loss of intellect, which can give rise to even more dangerous diseases like Cancer or Autoimmune disorder. As the *Ama* is destructive in nature, positive thinking is important in the healing process.

It is therefore equally crucial to focus on honoring our bodies and their innate capacity to process and eradicate *Ama* (with the right support). Remember that completely balanced *Agni* prevents *Ama* formation. Therefore, proper care of *Agni* is ultimately just as crucial as getting rid of *Ama*.

For maintaining an imbalanced *Agni* and for *Agni*'s optimal functioning some important protocols or aid are given below:

✓ The Importance of Healthy Digestion –

As an introduction to the critically important Ayurvedic concept of *Agni*, this resource explores the role of *Agni* in maintaining health and vitality throughout the body.

✓ The Importance of Agni –

This article explores the specific functioning of *Agni*, as well as the signs and symptoms of both healthy and impaired *Agni*.

✓ The Four Varieties of Agni –

This article compares balanced *Agni* to different types of imbalances that can disrupt it when excess *Tridosha* accumulates in the body and offers appropriate therapy for each type of imbalance.

✓ An Ayurvedic Guide to Healthy Elimination –

For the successful eradication of *Ama*, the elimination process is crucial. This resource provides a comprehensive look at healthy elimination through the lens of Ayurveda; it highlights the importance of healthy bowel habits and stools, offers some general tips for supporting proper elimination, and links to more specific articles on *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*-type elimination.

CONCLUSION

In Ayurveda, '*Kaya*' means *Agni*. *Agni* does the work of Digestion, Metabolism, Absorption, and Assimilation in the body. The absence of *Agni* causes many types of diseases. Due to the modern busy lifestyle, a person does not pay special attention to his food habits which play an important role in the formation of *Ama* due to the *Dushti* of *Agni*. The formation of *Amavisha* in itself is the cause of the origin of many dangerous diseases. To stop this process, the treatment of *Agni* and even before that its protection is very important.

Therefore, the *Agni needs* to remain balanced to run all the functions of the body. For this, *Agni* should be protected in a specific way by following a proper diet, *Dincharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Achar rasayan*, and *Sadvritta*, and by following the measures mentioned in Ayurveda.

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